THE COMMUNICATOR’S ROLE IN CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: A
STUDY OF NEWMONT GHANA GOLD LIMITED AND GOLD FIELDS GHANA
LIMITED

BY

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THIS LONG ESSAY IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON, IN
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DECLARATION

I, Dorothy Oforiwaa Ocran, do hereby declare that this research work was independently conducted by me at the Department of Communication Studies – University of Ghana. All the research materials that informed this study have been cited and acknowledged appropriately. I do also affirm that under no circumstances has this research work been presented to any other school in part or in whole for the award of either a diploma or degree. This work was successfully completed under the supervision of Dr. Margaret Ivy Amoakohene.

……………………………

Dr. Margaret Ivy Amoakohene
(Supervisor)

Dorothy Oforiwaa Ocran
(Student)
This study explored the role of the communicators of Newmont Ghana Gold Limited and Gold Fields Ghana Limited in the execution of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals of their companies. It was based on the logic of the excellence theory and stakeholder theory. These suggest, in effect, that symmetrical, participatory engagement with community members best enable the determination, promotion and implementation of appropriate CSR initiatives. Also important to this study were the challenges the communicators encountered in their involvement in executing the CSR goals of their companies.

The qualitative in-depth interview was used as the primary method of gathering data. The findings of this research revealed that the communicators were highly involved in the decision-making process that led to the institution of appropriate CSR interventions for communities. They were able to influence decisions on CSR initiatives by making suggestions on what the companies could do to improve the livelihoods of community members, improve the companies’ relationship with communities, renew social license for operation, and enhance their reputation. Based on their knowledge of stakeholders, communicators played key roles in promoting community identity with, and support for, CSR initiatives. In addition, they played varied roles in the implementation of decided initiatives and also supported the entire process with the suitable communication strategy, messaging, stakeholder profiling, and engagement approach to employ. Their overall roles and involvement in the CSR chain contributed to corporate effectiveness and successes, although challenges were also acknowledged.

The study therefore, concluded that Newmont Ghana Gold Limited and Gold Fields Ghana Limited were able to realize the benefits of their CSR goals because communicators were involved from conception to finish. It was therefore recommended that other companies and sectors should involve their communicators in the execution of their CSR goals to ensure maximum success.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to my parents: Mr. Patrick Anyimadu Ocran and Mrs. Cecilia Regina Ocran who inculcated in me ‘the can do spirit’ and taught me all I needed to know to be successful in life – it all came in handy for this study.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Until about the mid-1950s, corporations were mainly driven by economic motives. In operational terms, this was expressed as an obligation to produce profit, provide jobs, and enable economic growth and prosperity (Friedman, 1970).

The late 1970s and early 1980s were marked by the rise in corporate social responsibility (CSR) which coincided with the increased appreciation of corporate image as an asset, beyond economic profits. Over the subsequent decades, the number of companies which have been involved in one social responsibility programme or the other have increased considerably (Snider et al., 2003). Among the myriad of benefits that accrue to organizations engaged in CSR initiatives is the opportunity to build public goodwill and affect their corporate image and reputation. It is evident in CSR literature that thriving in today’s corporate world goes beyond producing quality goods and services. The overall ethical behaviour of corporations is a necessary factor to their success and encompasses the measures companies put in place to mitigate the adverse impact of their operations on their stakeholders.

Against this backdrop, CSR has become common among mining companies. The mining industry has been a leader in embracing CSR (Hinson, 2011). In their studies, Hinson and Nyame (2006) and Jenkins (2004) noted the growing resistance by communities to mining activities. Part of the strategy by mining companies in response to such resistance to their operations is the increasing adoption of CSR interventions and sustainability programmes (Jenkins, 2004; Schaefer, 2004). It is suggested in CSR literature that companies will experience lower levels
of community conflict with the strategic and successful implementation of CSR programmes (Jenkins, 2004). Strategic CSR initiatives would facilitate the needed social license for their operations and foster their relationship with their communities.

Meanwhile, social responsibility is understood as a basic, and sometimes synonymous concept of public relations (Heath, 2006). At the 1980 meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism at Boston University, Bernays was quoted by Clark (2000) as saying, “public relations is the practice of social responsibility” (p. 47). This is because public relations practitioners are acknowledged as intermediaries between organisations and their stakeholders. As citizens and interest groups become increasingly insistent on businesses in the extractive industry to adopt mitigation and sustainability measures, transparency has become a defining attribute of corporate best practices. To this extent, public relations professionals by virtue of their training are expected to offer strategic advice in the area of CSR where various stakeholders are engaged to agree on CSR initiatives.

This research was therefore designed to explore the role of public relations practitioners in the successful execution of CSR goals of their organisation taking into consideration their knowledge of their organisations’ stakeholders. While there is substantial research regarding the practical and ethical value of CSR to organisations, much attention has not been paid to the communicator’s role in CSR.

1.2 Meaning of corporate social responsibility (CSR)

The first definition of CSR was given by Bowen (1953) who asserted that, “CSR is the obligations of businessmen [women] to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our
society” (p.6). Following Bowen’s initial definition, there have been several definitions of CSR by both individuals and organisations. According to Wood (1991), CSR has been related to ethical codes, corporate philanthropy, community relations programmes, public responsibility and law abiding actions. Pearce and Doh (2005) also describe CSR as the actions of an organisation that benefit society and go beyond what is required by law and also the direct interests of shareholders. According to Bowd, Harris, and Cornelissen’s (2003), CSR is a practice by which organisations are “held accountable by explicit or inferred social contract with internal and external stakeholders, obeying the laws and regulations of government and operating in an ethical manner which exceeds statutory requirements…” (p. 19). This definition of CSR by Bowd, et. al. (2003) encompasses the views of scholars such as Carroll (1999), Wood (1991), Freeman (1984), and Friedman (1970) and embraces the dominant academic and industry views on CSR.

1.3 Public relations practice and CSR

Heath and Coombs (2006, p. 7) define public relations as “the management function that entails planning, research, publicity, promotion, and collaborative decision-making to help any organisation’s ability to listen to, appreciate, and respond appropriately to those persons and groups whose mutually beneficial relationships the organisation needs to foster as it strives to achieve its mission and vision.” According to Cofie (2013, p 4), “public relations functions comprise publicity, crisis and issues management, media relations, corporate social responsibility, community relations, employee relations, event management, fundraising, sponsorships, government relations and communications research.” The functions of public relations practitioners vary among organisations. Irrespective of which function public relations practitioners perform, they are anticipated to build and maintain a two-way communication
relationship, and facilitate exchange between an organization and its stakeholders (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). This is directed towards furnishing the management of organisations and their respective stakeholders with the requisite information essential for mutually beneficial decisions.

Corporate social responsibility falls within the public relations portfolio because its activities inevitably affect a company's image and reputation – whether positively or negatively. Accordingly, public relations practitioners will want to influence the process and outcome in a way that inures to their organisation’s best advantage, and to tell stakeholders exactly what sort of company they are dealing with (Kim & Reber, 2009).

In organisations, communicators or public relations practitioners are responsible for reputation management. Directly related to this role is that of acting as the liaison between the organization and its stakeholders. They proactively communicate the organisation’s plans, messages and expectations to its stakeholders and vice versa. Particularly in the CSR chain, communicators are perceived to understand the needs and expectations of the catchment communities of mining companies, hence their ability to provide strategic directions. CSR can be thought of as one tool in the process of balancing the interests of organisations and their stakeholders (Boynton, 2002). It thus presents opportunities for building positive relationships with stakeholders and so delivers target audiences to those managing the corporate image (L’Etang, 2006; Starck and Kruckeberg, 2003).

CSR is important to mining companies because it is a means by which they acquire the needed social license to facilitate their operations among other benefits. Given that CSR is seen as a vital tool in promoting and improving the public image of some of the world’s largest companies and corporations, CSR is most effective when it is expressed as a process of engagement with
stakeholders. This process reflects industry best practice as suggested both by Grunig et al.’s excellence theory (2002) and the stakeholder theory promoted by Freeman and Reed (1983). For companies to achieve their CSR objectives, CSR interventions ought to be carefully thought out and acted upon. From a public relations perspective, there are significant benefits in being involved in the early stages of CSR strategy development as professional communicators would be better able to make recommendations at the outset rather than provide band-aid solutions at a later stage. Thus, it is not surprising that public relations scholars have sought to identify the links between the practices of CSR and public relations, arguing a common use of stakeholder knowledge, awareness of organizational social responsibility and the ability to strengthen stakeholder relationships through effective communication (Clark, 2000). As asserted by Kim and Reber (2008), the links between public relations and corporate social responsibility span a significant management cross section of functions and contexts.

1.4 Operational definitions

1.4.1 Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

Corporate social responsibility as used in this study, refers to the initiatives or interventions (mainly activities and projects) that are instituted by mining companies to improve the livelihoods of stakeholder communities, meet their needs as well as mitigate the impact of the mining operations on those communities. Such initiatives include: provision of social amenities, scholarship schemes, and agricultural interventions.

1.4.2 Communication or public relations practice

Communication or public relations as used in this study refers to the management function which is responsible for building and maintaining two-way communication and facilitating exchange
between an organisation and its stakeholders (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). The functions of the public relations practice include: “publicity, crisis and issues management, media relations, corporate social responsibility, community relations, employee relations, event management, fundraising, sponsorships, government relations and communications research” (Cofie 2013, p 4).

1.4.3 The communicator or public relations practitioner

A communicator or a public relations practitioner as used in this study is a person who is engaged in any or all of the communications or public relations functions explicated above. For the purpose of this study, the terms public relations practitioner(s) and communicator(s) were used interchangeably. Both a communicator and a public relations practitioner referred to the same person, but communicator was used more extensively. The preliminary discussions the researcher held with the communicators of the two companies used for this study revealed that, they preferred to be called communicators rather than public relations practitioners. This is because of how the term public relations is used indiscriminately – spokespersons for diverse platforms who have no professional training and or experience in communication are usually referred to as public relations people.

1.4.4 Stakeholder(s)

Stakeholder(s) as operationalized in this research refers to people who are affected by the decisions of mining companies and people whose decisions affect those mining companies in one way or the other. Even though stakeholders include government bodies, communities, employees, stockholders, customers, suppliers, vendors, trade unions and the public, this study used it more to denote communities.
1.5 Problem Statement

Benn, Todd and Pendleton (2010) suggested that public relations professionals were seen only as a source of positive publicity for CSR. According to Starck and Kruckeberg (2003), apart from communicators influencing organizational culture through CSR communication to affect behavioural outcomes, their actual contribution particularly as regards leadership in CSR was not well defined. Meanwhile, Frynas (2005) postulated that public relations may be used to promote CSR activities developed in response to bad publicity where the company needed to improve its reputation or through community projects designed to build relationships with stakeholders in the community and enhance corporate reputation (David, 2004). In the case where community projects were designed to build relationships with stakeholder communities and enhance reputation, public relations would have strategic inputs into the selection and design of these activities rather than a reactive role in damage control. Considering that both CSR and public relations could be legitimizing strategies for organisations (Capriotti and Moreno, 2006), this study sought to find out what roles communicators played towards the achievement of the CSR goals of their companies. It sought to determine whether the communicators were only used for publicity as some scholars had suggested or they were thoroughly involved in the decision chain, from conception to execution. Considering that CSR should be an all-encompassing process of decision-making, promoting initiatives for communities buy-in and then implementation – what were the roles of the communicator in this process of successfully executing CSR goals of mining companies in Ghana?

1.6 Objectives of study

The overall aim of the study was to find out the role the communicator played in the execution of companies’ CSR goals. Flowing from this, the specific objectives were to:
Discover the extent to which communicators were involved in the decision-making process of identifying appropriate CSR initiatives for communities.

Find out the role communicators played in promoting identified CSR initiatives to communities for their buy-in.

Ascertain the involvement of communicators in the implementation of decided CSR initiatives for communities.

Find out whether communicators encountered any challenges in their involvement in executing the CSR goals of their companies.

1.7 Research Questions

Against the backdrop of the above-stated objectives, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent does the involvement of the communicator of Newmont Ghana Gold Limited (NGGL) and Gold Fields Ghana Limited (GFGL) in the decision-making process lead to the institution of appropriate CSR interventions for communities?

2. What are the challenges communicators of NGGL and GFGL encounter in their involvement in executing the CSR goals of their companies?

1.8 Profile of companies studied

Two mining companies were studied to find out the role communicators played in CSR. These companies were Newmont Ghana Gold Limited (NGGL) and Gold Fields Ghana Limited (GFGL).
1.8.1 Newmont Ghana Gold Limited

Newmont Ghana has been operating in Ghana since 2002. It has two subsidiaries: Ahafo mine in the Brong-Ahafo region and Akyem mine in the Eastern region. Newmont’s Ahafo mine is located along the Sefwi volcanic belt, a northeast-southwest trending volcanic belt in the Western Ghana. Ahafo is in the Brong-Ahafo region, approximately 307 kilometres northwest from the national capital city of Accra. The Akyem operation is also located in the Birim North District of the Eastern region, approximately 111 miles northwest of the capital city of Accra. Production commenced in 2006 at Ahafo mine and in 2013 at Akyem mine (www.newmontghana.com).

1.8.2 Gold Fields Ghana Limited

GFGL was incorporated in Ghana in 1993 as the legal entity holding the Tarkwa concession mining rights. GFGL has a strong presence in Ghana with two subsidiaries: Tarkwa and Damang mines. The Tarkwa Gold mine is located in southwestern Ghana near the southern end of what is commonly referred to as the Tarkwa Basin, 300 kilometres by rad west of Accra. The Damang mine is located in southwestern Ghana (www.goldfieldsghana.com).

1.8.3 Justification for companies selection

The two companies were selected for the study because both had won global industry awards for some aspect of their CSR. They both had well established Foundations which were instituted to manage their CSR activities. In addition, both companies had vibrant communications departments – communications sat at the managerial levels of these companies. Their outstanding global performance in CSR and sustainability as well as the vibrant nature of their communications departments were important qualities needful for this study. The
Communicators were strategically positioned to provide valuable information on their roles in the execution of their CSR goals, which were indispensable to their companies’ success.

1.9 Significance of study

The involvement of communicators in the design of CSR projects will ensure that the utilities derived from the CSR projects are high both for beneficiaries and for corporate. This is due to the fact that communicators are likely to have a better understanding of the needs of communities by virtue of their intermediary role. Identifying the strategic role of the public relations professional will ensure a paradigm change in how CSR projects are designed in order to catalyse community development. The study would serve as a guide for companies on how to make use of public relations for the institution of effective and successful CSR interventions. Extant studies have focused on various aspects of public relations or communication in organisations such as: internal and external communication, employee relations etc. Research information in the area of the relationship between the communicator and CSR in organisations is still emerging even though the two are essential to organizational success (Clark 2000). This study sought to contribute to the body of literature in this area. Study on CSR and the role of the communicator is on the whole pertinent, due to the increased popularity of CSR and how it continues to pervade the public relations arena.

1.10 Organisation of the study

The study is presented in five (5) distinct chapters comprising the design, process and the outcome of the entire study. Chapter one (1) gives a background of the study and situates it within context by explicating public relations and corporate social responsibility and then drawing the linkage between the two. The objectives and the research questions underlining the
study are also presented in this chapter. Chapter two (2) is where the theories underpinning the study are stated with their complementary justifications. Related scholarly works are reviewed. In Chapter three (3), the methodology used for the study is described. This comprises the design of the research, data gathering processes and procedures for data analysis. Chapter four (4) is where the findings of the study are reported. Chapter five (5) discusses the findings, summarises the results and concludes the study. It further gives the limitations to the study and offers recommendations for future research. At the end of the research, is a list of bibliography that informed the study and the interview guide used for data collection which is attached as an appendix.

1.11 Summary

This chapter covered an introduction of the study and presented an overview of the relationship between public relations or communication and CSR. In addition, the chapter also encompassed the definition of the problem being studied, the research questions that the study sought to answer, and then explained the significance of the study. The chapter concluded with the organization of the study. The next chapter presents the theories which underpinned this study and then reviewed scholarly research related to the study.
CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED STUDIES

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the theories which guided the research are explained. The Excellence theory and the Stakeholder theory were used as framework for the study. The chapter discusses the theories and relates them to the study.

2.1 Excellence theory

According to Grunig (2000), the Excellence theory explained the worth of public relations to corporations, constructed on the social responsibility of managerial decisions and the quality of relationships with stakeholders or publics. It is mainly about the organisation of public relations to enable it contribute well to organizational success and effectiveness (Grunig, 2002).

The Excellence theory is a general theory of public relations (Lindeborg, 1994) that resulted from a study led by James E. Grunig about the best practices in public relations or communication management. The study was funded by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) research foundation in 1985. Out of this research, three books were published (J. E. Grunig 1992; Dozier et al. 1995; L. A. Grunig et al. 2002).

The study revealed that good relationships were a form of great capital to organisations. To this end, the public relations function ought to be strategically placed, organized and exploited to manage such relationships and to a larger extent contribute to the success and effectiveness of the organisation.
According to the excellence theory, the effectiveness of an organisation is dependent on its behaviour towards solving the problems of stakeholders, while concurrently enabling the management functions of planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling the factors of production in ways that lead to the attainment of corporate goals. An organization is likely to encounter opposition or pressures from stakeholders if it falls short of this balance. To behave in socially acceptable ways, organisations must scan their environment to identify stakeholders who are affected by potential organisational decisions or who want organisations to make decisions to solve problems that are important to them. Then, organisations must communicate symmetrically with stakeholders while taking into account the interests of both the organisation and stakeholders, to cultivate excellent, long-standing relationships with them. Symmetrical communication is achieved when organisations and stakeholders compromise and collaborate towards the attainment of mutually beneficial goals (Grunig, 1992). Symmetrical communication is often used in comparison with asymmetrical communication to suggest that organizational goals are best attained when people feel a part of the decisions in which they have a stake.

Over the years, many scholars have improved and enlarged the theory through further research following Grunig’s study to help maximize the public relations functions by emphasizing the need for professionals to participate in strategic decision processes. Given the recommendation of the theory that public relations ought to play an influential role in the strategic management and decision-making processes of organisations, it provided the logic and indicators for assessing the role communicators played towards the effective and successful execution of their companies’ corporate social responsibility goals, both at NGGL and GFGL.
2.2 Stakeholder theory

Related to the excellence study is the concept of stakeholder engagement. The concept – stakeholder – was first used in 1963 in an internal memorandum at the Stanford Research Institute (Freeman 1983). The concept, according to its first usage refers to groups whose support the organisation needs, so as to remain in existence and competitive. The concept was developed to a theory and championed by Edward Freeman in the 1980s (Freeman and Reed, 1983, p. 89).

Stakeholder theory is a theory of organisational management and business ethics that addresses morals and values in managing an organisation. Freeman (1983) identifies the groups which are stakeholders of a corporation, as well as describe and recommend methods by which management can give due regard to the interests of those groups. Hahn (2005) notes that a newer approach to the consideration of objective is the 'stakeholder' theory which suggests that a company has responsibility to maintain an equitable and working balance among the claims of the interested groups, i.e. stockholders, employees, customers, suppliers, vendors, and the public. Stakeholders are government bodies, political groups, trade associations, trade unions, communities, financiers, suppliers, employees and customers (Freeman & Reed, 1983). Sometimes even competitors are counted as stakeholders - their status being derived from their capacity to affect the firm and its other morally legitimate stakeholders. The cluster of stakeholders varies among different types of organisations and the focus of their businesses.

Public relations dwells on building and maintaining healthy relationships between organisations and their respective stakeholders. According to Grunig and Repper (1992, p.125), “People are stakeholders because they are in a category affected by decisions of an organisation or if their decision affects the organization.” Since the actions and inactions of stakeholders have some bearing on the organisation and vice versa, the organization should strive to meet the needs and
expectations of their stakeholders and keep them satisfied. Thus the organization must continually align its values and strategies with the stakeholder’s interest. This requires the organisation to know its stakeholders as that would give a clue as to how best to communicate to them and the right message to convey in order to yield mutually beneficial results. This then helps to shape the organisation’s communications strategy which is carefully thought out and targeted. It is noteworthy that stakeholder management is a function of public relations or communications. The communicator or public relations professional must continually indulge in environmental scanning, issues monitoring, threats analysis and skepticism. Mining companies operate with the consent of stakeholders, primary among them being the local communities. The communicator’s ability to foster good relationships with these stakeholder groups as well as win their consent facilitates the acquisition of the needed social license to operate.

This theory grounds the research objective on the role communicator’s play in promoting identified CSR interventions to communities for their buy-in as that process is expected to involve stakeholder engagements.

2.4 Related studies

In her research on public relations and corporate social responsibility: some issues arising, L’Etang (1994) examined the links between corporate social responsibility and public relations from an ethical perspective and questioned existing assumptions along with practices of corporate social responsibility and particularly, the role that public relations played in its implementation. The premise of the study was that public relations and corporate social responsibility were not separate activities which should be evaluated separately but that often the two activities were interconnected in such a way that corporate social responsibility became a tool for public relations. Small scale empirical research was carried out among twelve major
companies in the consumer and industrial sectors in the UK to review existing practice. The companies were approached individually for information about their activities in the field with unstructured questionnaire because the researcher already had some knowledge of their activities in the field and the purpose of the questions was to probe and seek deeper evaluative information about particular aspects of those activities. Having explored the varied scope and role of public relations, the research established that while public relations could help business to respond to society in accordance with the two-way symmetrical model, it could also use propaganda type tactics in its publicity mode. If the requirements of the latter function start to drive the way in which public relations contributes to policy formulation then this seems to raise ethical problems, not only in relation to the motivation of the company and the moral value of the corporate social responsibility programmes but also in relation to public relations and its role in society.

This study sought to use its findings to either affirm the assertion of L’Etang (1994) or otherwise, that corporate social responsibility and public relations were not separate functions and should be evaluated separately.

Preciado-Hoyos (2013) studied the role of public relations in corporate social responsibility programmes in the Colombian electricity sector. The objective of the study was to determine whether the companies in the chosen sector relied on public relations practices to manage social responsibility, particularly with respect to the relationship between public relations and stakeholders and how the company implemented this relationship. In-depth interviews were conducted from a semi-structured questionnaire among ten companies. The study found out that communication professionals who supported social responsibility programmes did not hold a unified concept of public relations. Likewise, not all of those communication professionals acknowledged the prevailing model, which regarded the practice of public relations as seeking
both harmony with its environment and mutual benefit with the public interest (Preciado-Hoyos, 2013).

The relation of this research to Preciado-Hoyos’ (2013) study had to do with making the most out of the communicator’s knowledge of stakeholders for the successful execution of CSR goals – how the communicator was involved and the complementary outcome.

Kim and Reber (2008) researched public relations’ place in corporate social responsibility and how practitioners defined their role. The study examined the attitudes of public relations practitioners across the United States about their role in CSR through an online survey. The responses from 173 PR practitioners were subjected to qualitative analysis and data reduction adapted from Lindlof (1995). The responses were sorted, categorized and the data were interrelated based on themes.

The study found out that public relations practitioners identified five roles for public relations in CSR which are: significant management, none, philanthropic, value-driven, and communication. Public relations professionals illustrated these roles by describing their contributions to the social responsibility programs of their respective companies. They also expressed limitations to their ability to contribute to CSR programmes.

Even though the purpose of this research was not to test the themes: significant management, philanthropic, value-driven, communication, and none identified by Kim and Reber (2008), it looked out for those themes as it explored the communicator’s role in CSR.

In another study conducted by Kim and Reber (2009), on how public relations professionalism influences corporate social responsibility, the researchers sought to better understand the
perceptions of public relations practitioners with regard to professionalism and CSR. They explored the association between public relations professionalism and their attitudes toward corporate social responsibility using a national survey among 289 professionals. The study showed meaningful and significant results regarding the relationship between professionalism and CSR as well as correlations between the two phenomena. The researchers found out that public relations practitioners with high professionalism had more positive attitudes toward CSR.

According to Kim and Reber (2009), there was a possibility to improve public relations’ low standards of professionalism by emphasizing the role for social responsibility; when public relations practitioners valued their role for society, their professionalism would be improved and public relations would be more valued by society. The research revealed empirically one of the most often emphasized concepts in public relations, public relations’ significant responsibility to society as an important value of professionalism. It further recommended that more qualitative in-depth studies about relationship between professionalism and CSR in public relations were needed. This study sought to confirm the assertion or otherwise of Kim and Reber (2009) that public relations practitioners with high professionalism had more positive attitudes toward CSR.

In a research conducted on public relations leadership in corporate social responsibility in Australia by Benn, Todd and Pendleton (2010), the researchers explored the motives of a sample of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) from prominent Australian-based corporations for implementing CSR and the leadership styles they adopted in doing so. In the context of the leadership practices of the CEOs, the researchers examined the potential for professional communicators to play an influential role with respect to advancing CSR-driven policies that go beyond mere branding. Empirical data was collected using the qualitative approach and taking a cross-sectoral case-based approach as they needed in-depth information on how corporate
leaders perceived their leadership style and CSR motivations and how they presented their relationship to the public relations profession.

Benn et al. (2010) found out that while public relations theory had evolved, many leaders still saw public relations professionals only as a source of positive publicity. They concluded that the public relations profession needed to develop a greater understanding of senior management approaches to the development and dissemination of CSR activities to support organizational leadership as it currently operates with respect to CSR (Benn et al., 2010).

This study revealed the perspective of communicators on the value leaders of their organisations placed on communications based on the involvement of the former in the decision-making process through to the institutions of appropriate CSR interventions for communities.

Clark (2000) found out in her research on the differences between public relations and corporate social responsibility that effective communication methods were largely absent from CSR literature. Meanwhile, the inclusion of communication techniques in CSR goals had the huge potential of enhancing the development as well as the total impact of managing organizational stakeholder relationships. The researcher employed detailed review of literature with focus on: origins, theories, processes, and primary responsibilities of both public relations and CSR. The researcher found the two phenomena to be similar and hence asserted that even though there was a relationship between corporate public relations and CSR in both their evolution and their modern practice, additional research should be conducted into the ways in which to combine these areas to optimize organizational effectiveness which would aid those in the business and communications fields (Clark, 2000).
Even though this study did not set out to compare CSR and public relations or communication but rather the communicator’s role in CSR, the study revealed how closely related the two phenomenon are.

Mazutis and Zintel (2015) studied leadership and corporate social responsibility through a comprehensive, systematic and narrative review of all published quantitative studies that had examined the link between leadership and corporate responsibility. By their study, the researchers sought to consolidate the state of the empirical research to date on the relationship between the two phenomena. Mazutis and Zintel (2015) situated their study in the context that both “leadership” and “corporate responsibility” constructs had been loosely applied in extant literature. Thus, they widely captured any empirical study that had examined any element of leadership, in and of the organization, from any position of responsibility (eg. CEOs, top management teams, board of directors, team leaders, etc.).

The findings of the research identified validated direct, indirect and moderating effects of leadership on corporate social responsibility. The research further confirmed that the empirical evidence supported the significance of leadership to corporate social responsibility efforts in organisations. This study sought to discover the leadership role of communicators as well as their effects of the corporate social responsibility of their organisations.

2.5 Summary

This chapter situated the study within the Excellence theory and the Stakeholder theory. The chapter also reviewed other related works on public relations and corporate social responsibility.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research method that was used for the study, highlighting the target population, sample size, sampling procedure, data gathering procedure, data analysis strategy are covered in this chapter. This study was conducted qualitatively and the in-depth interview was used as the data collection method. With the aid of an interview guide, six (6) communicators were interviewed from the two companies used for the study. The in-depth interviews enabled the researcher to ask supplementary questions to acquire the needed information on the subject of study.

3.1 Research Sites

The companies used for the study were Newmont Ghana Gold Limited (NGGL) and Gold Fields Ghana Limited (GFGL). NGGL and GFGL have two subsidiaries each in Ghana where they undertake their mining operations. NGGL has one mining operation in Ahafo-Kenyasi and the other in New Abirem-Akyem. GFGL also has one mining operation in Tarkwa and the other in Damang. Both NGGL and GFGL have head offices in Accra as well – NGGL calls its regional office, while GFGL call its corporate office. The head offices and the two subsidiaries of each company have communicators. For NGGL, the senior director of external relations and communications is stationed at the regional office. Both the Ahafo and Akyem mines have their respective communications manager on site, they are identified as external relations and communications managers. The director of communication oversees the work of the external relations and communications managers of both sites. At GFGL the vice president, stakeholder relations is located at the corporate office. The Tarkwa and Damang mines have their distinct
community affairs and public relations managers. Against this backdrop, the interview was administered to the three communicators of each company, thus the directors and their respective managers. This brought the total number of interviewees to six (6).

3.2 Research Design

The research set out to ascertain the role communicators played in the CSR goals of their companies in isolation from all the other roles they played towards the general organizational success. The study employed the qualitative research methodology. Qualitative methodology refers to “a broad class of empirical procedures designed to describe and interpret the experiences of research participants in a context-specific setting” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In qualitative research, data is collected, analysed and discussed in a narrative form instead of a numerical form.

The choice of the qualitative methodology was to enable the researcher acquire in-depth information. As stated by Grunig (2002), the most common qualitative method that could be used for assessing relationships is the in-depth interview because it helps the researcher understand the motives of people and explain what they think and do in their own terms.

3.3 Population

The study population refers to the complete set of individuals who have common observable characteristics in which the researcher is interested (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). Selltiz, Wrightsman and Cook (1976, p. 513) define population as “the aggregate of all the cases that conform to some designated set of specification.” The target population for this research was all the communicators of Newmont Ghana Gold Limited and Gold Fields Ghana Limited.
3.4 Sampling

According to Spata (2003), samples refer to the units which are selected from the target population to take part in the research project. Sampling is an important step in the research process because it helps to determine the quality of interpretations made by the researcher that come from the underlying findings (Collins, Onwuegbuzie & Jiao, 2006). The study used the purposive sampling technique. With this sampling technique, the researcher selects the unit subjectively from the target population to participate in the study. Their selection is usually based on specific characteristics or qualities they possess. The objectives of the study dictated the sample size. Six (6) communicators were purposively selected from the communications departments of the two mining companies used for this research.

3.5 Data collection procedure

The in-depth interview was used as the data collection method. An in-depth interview is a broad personalized dialogue through which one can obtain detailed information (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Trochim (2006, p. 8) asserted that, “the purpose of an interview is to probe the ideas of the interviewees about the phenomenon of interest.” According to Wimmer and Dominick (2000: 121), “the biggest advantage of the in-depth interview is the wealth of detail that it provides.” The discussion between the researcher and the researched serves to produce a constructed reality and in order that the researcher’s interpretations do not dominate, the voices of the researched are usually given fairly substantial displays.

The six (6) sampled communicators were interviewed; the researcher asked follow-up questions to probe further and this gave better understanding of the communicator’s involvement and functions as pertains to CSR. Gordon (1980) asserts that “effective in-depth qualitative interview
entails creating a shared concern for each other; in which both the interviewer and the respondent understand the contextual nature of the interview.”

3.6 Data collection instruments

Since the researcher conducted interviews as a means of collecting primary data for the study, a semi-structured interview guide was used. The interview guide is basically a list of questions which guide both the interviewer and interviewee during the data gathering process. The interview guide helps to maintain the focus of the researcher as much as it helps respondents to sharpen their knowledge on particular areas prior to the interview. According to Patton (2002), the interview guide keeps the focus of study within the time limit whiles allowing respondents to enrich the data with their stories. Likewise, Turner (2010) asserted that consistency is guaranteed with the application of the interview guide for information gathering from respondents.

Guided by the assertions of the aforementioned scholars, an interview guide was developed for the interviews. Questions in the guide were structured along the objectives and research questions that directed the study. The themes derived from the research questions were capitalized on to expand the areas of questioning for the collection of the requisite data. The interview guide covered such themes as: decision-making, promotion of CSR initiatives to communities, implementation and challenges. A preliminary meeting was held with some of the communicators ahead of the development of the interview guide and some of their suggestions and inputs were incorporated into the structure of the guide. One interview guide was used for all the interviews with the sampled communicators, with a few varying questions for the Accra-based heads. Nonetheless, the interview guide was not followed strictly as questions were asked based on the responses of the interviewees.
The researcher contacted the respondents, explained the core of the research to them and then furnished them with a write-up on the background. Upon their acceptance to participate in the research, the interview guide was circulated to them to facilitate their individual preparation. Meetings were then scheduled for the interviews. Whereas four (4) out of the six (6) respondents were interviewed face-to-face, two (2) of the respondents were interviewed over the telephone because their locations could not be accessed during the period of data collection. The interviews were conducted over a period of one week, between July 7 and 15, 2016. Even though the researcher took notes during the interviews, all the interviews were recorded for accuracy of facts. The recordings were transcribed and categorised into themes for analysis and to subsequently draw conclusions for this study.

3.7 Data Analysis

The recorded interviews were manually transcribed by the researcher. Following the transcription, similar responses were put in one category while stand-alone responses were put in a different category. Responses to each question on each transcript were further grouped according to the themes developed from the research questions.

3.8 Summary

This chapter described the methodology employed for the study. The research design, target population, sampling technique and data collection were described in this chapter. In the next chapter, the findings and complementary discussions of the study are presented.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

As stated earlier in Chapter one (1), the objective of this research was to find out the role communicators of Newmont Ghana Gold Limited (NGGL) and Gold Fields Ghana Limited (GFGL) played in the achievement of the corporate social responsibility goals (CSR) of their companies. This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the in-depth interviews conducted with the six (6) communicators. It begins with a brief background of how communications and CSR are each carried out in both NGGL and GFGL. It then proceeds to align the findings to the research objectives that guided the study by looking at the extent to which communicators of the two companies were involved in the decision-making process of identifying appropriate CSR initiatives for communities and their role in promoting identified CSR initiatives to communities for their buy-in. It further expound on the ways in which these communicators are involved in the implementation of decided CSR initiatives for communities and then highlights the challenges they encountered in their involvement in executing the CSR goals of their companies.

The three communicators interviewed from NGGL were the: senior director, external relations and communications; external relations and communications manager – Ahafo mine; and external relations and communications manager – Akyem mine. They are identified here as NC1, NC2 and NC3 respectively; NC being an abbreviation of Newmont communicator. Because the role as well as the information acquired from NC2 and NC3 were essentially similar, transcripts from the interview with NC3 are mainly used.
The three communicators interviewed at GFGL were the: vice president, stakeholder relations; community affairs and public relations manager – Tarkwa, and community affairs and public relations manager – Damang. They are identified as GFC1, GFC2 and GFC3 respectively; GFC being the abbreviated form of Gold Fields communicator. Owing to the fact that the role as well as the information acquired from GFC2 and GFC3 were essentially the same, transcripts from the interview with GFC3 are mainly used.

4.1 Communication at Newmont Ghana Gold Limited

The Ahafo and Akyem mines constitute the African regional operation of NGGL. There are communications departments at all of Newmont’s operational offices including its regional office in Accra and then its site offices at Akyem and Ahafo. NC1 oversees the communications of the company from the regional level while NC2 and NC3 do the same at the site levels. All NCs handle the media, manage internal communication, provide support to the executive body, engage with key stakeholders of the company, as well as develop and implement the communications strategy of the company. The overall communication strategy is directed towards articulating the company’s business strategy for appreciation and application by members at their respective jurisdictions.

NC2 and NC3 are superintended by the NC1. In effect, NC2 and NC3 play very similar roles except that they are restricted to the operational jurisdiction of their respective mines. NC1 works closely with the senior director of sustainability and external relations at the regional level to execute the CSR goals of the company. Meanwhile, on site, the communications function falls under the broader sustainability and external relations function; that is to say that communications is embedded in the sustainability and external relations function on site unlike at the regional level where both functions are isolated. Hence there is a senior manager for
sustainability and external relations at each operational site with whom NC2 and NC3 work closely.

### 4.2 Communication at Gold Fields Ghana Limited

The Tarkwa and Damang mines constitute the Ghana division of GFGL’s operations. Communications is key at GFGL – the function is strategically positioned at the managerial levels of the corporate office, Tarkwa mine and the Damang mining operations. GFC1 is in charge of communications within the Ghana division. He manages corporate and stakeholder relations at GFGL’s corporate office by networking and maintaining relations with government, policy makers as well as key decision makers, the media and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs). CSR falls under the ambit of GFC1; hence he ensures that the company’s CSR is maintained and delivered as it ought to. He oversees GFC2 and GFC3 who ensure that established stakeholders engagement systems are well managed to maintain healthy relationships with government, traditional authorities and stakeholder communities, NGOs and the media. He also supervises learning and development programmes in their respective communities. Together with these stakeholders, they plan, implement and evaluate community infrastructural projects and ensure that the company’s foundation activities receive good and effective publicity. GFC2 and GFC3 who play very similar roles at their individual operational jurisdictions, work closely with the sustainability development managers of both mining sites, particularly to implement the company’s CSR programmes.

### 4.3 Corporate social responsibility at Newmont Ghana Gold Limited

As explained by the communicators of NGGL, CSR in NGGL is a topmost priority which is well incorporated into the company’s business strategy. The underlining purpose of NGGL’s business operations is to create value for government and stakeholder communities and improve lives
through sustainable and responsible mining; hence the pillars of the company: safety, integrity, sustainability, inclusion and responsibility.

The CSR agenda of NGGL is driven by its Foundations. The Foundation for the Ahafo mine is called Newmont Ahafo Development Foundation (NADeF) while the Foundation for the Akyem mine is called Newmont Akyem Development Foundation (NAkDeF).

The company set up these foundations in agreement with the communities for its CSR goals in the long term, and this is incorporated in the company’s environmental impact statement. The Foundations are autonomous of the company and are registered as sole entities except that within the legal framework of Newmont, they are counted as agencies of Newmont. There is a board of trustees for the Foundations who drive the development agenda of each sites’ stakeholder communities along with the communities’ sustainability development committees (SDCs).

The company provides the funding and guides the two Foundations on what the company’s values, vision and mission are for establishing the Foundation so that those are adhered to. The Foundations provide technical support to the SDCs. NC3 explained that at both Ahafo and Akyem, one (1) dollar per ounce of gold produced and one (1) per cent of net profit are invested into the respective Foundations which are cognizant of how the money should be shared among the communities. NGGL has representatives on the board for each operation. They sit on the board with the SDCs to approve projects so that they fall within the boundaries of the pillars governing the company’s CSR as well as the prevailing budget.

4.4 Corporate social responsibility at Gold Fields Ghana Limited

The communicators of GFGL explained that the company looks at CSR from a very strategic point of view because it is an integral part of its operations. It is a business imperative which is
intertwined with its production and the company’s philosophy; thus production is linked directly to funds that are used for implementing the company’s CSR goals. It is therefore not called CSR at GFGL but sustainability development. GFC1 explained that CSR activities of GFGL are driven by the company’s Foundation – the Gold Fields Foundation which is the main vehicle for driving CSR investment projects. The funding formula for the Foundation is one dollar per ounce of gold produced plus one (1) percent of the company’s pre-tax profit.

The Foundation has a board of trustees which includes the management of the mine as well as the members of parliament in the area where the company has its mining operations. The board of trustees gives final approval for the implementation of CSR projects for the communities.

There is a documented framework that guides the work of the Foundation. The company holds consultative committee meetings with the communities to collect their requests for onward approval of the board of trustees. The communities’ consultative committees of the Tarkwa and Damang mines are constituted by the stakeholder communities of each mining operation. Taking cognizance of the fact that often, the projects the communities request exceed the funds available, the company guides them to prioritize. According to GFC3, the projects requested are expected to fall within the pillars of the company’s involvement which are: education, health, agriculture and agri-business, water and sanitation, and infrastructure.

4.5 Communicators involvement in decision-making

From the interviews with both NGGL and GFGL, it was discovered that their stakeholder communities had been empowered to drive their own CSR through periodic projects request from the companies. CSR initiatives originated just occasionally from companies and communicators were largely involved in the decision-making of those CSR initiatives. However,
their scope of involvement had a direct link with the position and location of the communicators considering that some of them were positioned in Accra and others on the operational sites as mentioned earlier.

4.5.1 Newmont communicators’ involvement in decision-making

The interviews revealed that even though CSR did not fall directly in the domain of communications at NGGL, the communications team’s involvement bordered around guiding the sustainability and external relations department with the communications strategy, the messaging, stakeholder profiling, and the engagement approach.

However, NC1 had the clout to bring suggestions on what CSR initiatives should be driven to enhance the reputation of the company to the decision-making table with other managers for discussions and finalization at the regional level. She said,

I would take up things (CSR initiatives) that I think we probably need to focus on as a company and key stakeholders.

She also mentioned that apart from CSR for the communities, the company also supported other projects identified by some stakeholders and she was involved in that decision-making process by affirming the value of those projects to the company. NC1 said,

So the Ebola was one CSR thing that we did. Government approached us and then we supported them. So at the Brong Ahafo and the Eastern regions, we decided to be responsible for our districts and so we worked with government to do that. This was a regional decision – so it was taken by me and my boss and the S&ER team etc. and we discussed it with the leadership team. So such things are driven directly by me.

She further noted that NC2 and NC3 were more involved with the decision-making on CSR for the communities than she was because their location within the community enabled direct associations with the communities while she was placed at the regional level. NC2 and NC3
were on the ground to assist and also ensure that the CSR projects instituted fell within the five pillars of the company. NC3 said,

Because I am on site, I am part of the planning and communication process of CSR – so we develop a communication plan to support community development and then I am part of the stakeholder engagements, consultation process.

According to NC3 even though he did not sit on the board of trustees that approved CSR projects for the communities, the sustainability and external relations manager who sat on that board involved him by seeking his views on the projects ahead of the board meetings. This he said was done to seek the communicator’s perspective on the reputational capital those projects would generate for the company, due to the communicator’s broader perspective of various stakeholders.

4.5.2 Gold Fields communicators’ involvement in decision-making

With GFGL however, because CSR fell directly under the ambit of GFC1, all the three communicators had very direct involvement in the decision-making process of identifying appropriate CSR initiatives for communities. GFCI said he sat on the board of trustees which gave final approval for projects to be implemented. Periodically, he initiated CSR initiatives which were mutually beneficial to the company and the communities. He explained this by alluding to a horticultural project the company was embarking on in partnership with the GIZ. He said,

For example for this project, we intend to put out an advertisers announcement and that is driven by me. Once we are done with the community entry, I would work with the GIZ to issue an advertisers announcement to the public to tell them about that programme, what Gold Fields is doing.

On the part of GFC2 and GFC3, their involvement in the decision-making process had more to do with communities’ engagements – they coordinated the communities’ consultative committee
meetings and the discussions to ensure that the requested projects fell within the CSR pillars of the company. Explaining his involvement, GFC 3 said,

My involvement varies – at the community development and the consultative committee angle, I lead the process of getting the requests from the people. I coordinate to ensure that whatever the communities are requesting sit within, or are done in a way that sync with the company’s goals. So I ask the relevant questions to ensure that those projects meet the requirements.

He also mentioned that he guided the communities to prioritize their requests considering that usually the communities’ requests exceeded the prevailing budget. He also made presentations to the trustees on the requests gathered from the communities where he had to justify how those projects would be mutually beneficial to the company and the communities.

4.6 Communicators role in promoting CSR initiatives

The researcher found out that communicators of both NGGL and GFGL played important roles in the promotion of CSR initiatives which originated from the companies for communities buy-in. This was based on their knowledge of and relationship with stakeholders.

4.6.1 Newmont communicators’ role in promoting CSR initiatives

At NGGL, the communicators supported the sustainability and external relations plus the community relations departments with the communications strategy, messaging, and then prepared them for the community engagements. According to NC1, they employed a participatory communication approach for the buy-in. However, NC2 and NC3 embarked on the engagement process on site with the community relations department while NC1 provided technical advice on how the engagements were approached. She said,

My role would be to identify the key stakeholders who should be involved in those discussions. How are we going to engage them and communicate? So depending on what it is, the site Coms Managers would handle it and then bounce it off the regional level.
Because of the way our operations run and the country run as well, decisions taken in Ahafo or Akyem would have bearing on the regional level and so a lot of discussions precede actions.

NC3 emphasised that they held meetings with the sustainability development committees and the district assembly during which they gave the latter a brief about the project and its benefits to the communities and then decisions were taken based on that.

4.6.2 Gold Fields communicators’ role in promoting CSR initiatives

According to GFC1, GFGL gets communities’ buy-in through the communities’ consultative committees. The communicators embarked on community entry engagements which focused on helping the communities understand the identified project, its benefits to them along with their responsibilities. They did this to acquaint the communities with the projects and largely so that the communities became owners of the projects. GFC1 said that the structures for such communication already existed so they utilized them as and when it was necessary. GFC2 and GFC3 who interfaced directly between the company and the communities coordinated the engagements with the communities for their buy-in. GFC2 explained the process as,

I sell the idea to them and then you have people buying into the ideas and then you get along with that. Now we are going to have a horticulture project – we said that indeed the mine will not be here forever and the mine has affected the farms of people and so we discussed it with the communities in order to structure it. We did it through face-to-face meetings, focus-group discussions etc.

The GFC3 talked about holding meetings with the traditional and opinion leaders ahead of the bigger engagements with the communities. He said,

So the leaders usually organize the communities for us – they will ask what are they going to talk to our people about? And then we will say we have this idea that we think would work and they would say fine then you can come around and then we meet with them.
The GFC3 further explained that they made presentations to the communities and the latter asked questions for clarification and then went on to accept when they were convinced. He shed more light on his roles as,

I am the one going to see the opinion leaders to first of all sell the idea to them. I am the one going to liaise with them to organize the durbar and I will be the one inviting the third party (if we are partnering with another organization eg. GIZ) to come and assist in the presentation since I do not have all the information. I will be answering questions as they relate to the company while the third party gives answers on the project I may not have.

The communicators at GFGL were the core people who promoted CSR initiatives which originated from the company to communities for their buy-in.

4.7 Communicators’ involvement in implementing of CSR initiatives

The interviews revealed that all communicators of NGGL (NC1, NC2 and NC3) were involved in the implementation of decided initiatives in diverse ways. At GFGL on the other hand, GFC1 was not involved in the implementation process at all even though GFC2 and GFC3 played key roles in the process.

4.7.1 Newmont communicators’ involvement

At NGGL, the communicators explained that the implementation process was done by the joint efforts of various departments. NC1 described her role in the implementation process as,

The role I have is to work with our teams to ensure that the right engagement is being done in the day to day implementation. If there ought to be an engagement with key stakeholders, I would come up with that and I would come up with the communications plan.

The NC3 also said since the process was quite technical his involvement was minimal. He followed the developmental stages of the projects to buttress future communication. He said,
The only role I play here in this process is gathering photos, in terms of footages – so that in future when we are communicating the process, we can say this is where we started from and this is where we are with the final project.

4.7.2 Gold Fields communicators’ involvement

With GFGL, various departments joined forces to implement decided initiatives. GFCI was not directly involved in the process but addressed crucial issues which emanated from the implementation process. He pointed out that he rather had much more involvement in the aftermath of the implementation when projects needed to be commissioned and handed over to communities. He said,

Once these projects or programmes are implemented if there is a need for an official commissioning of the projects and then I will arrange that for the EVP to go down to site to commission those projects.

On the other hand, GFC2 and GFC3 had thorough involvement in the implementation process but this was highly dependent on the kind of project or programme being implemented. GFC3 expatiated on the implementation process as,

It depends on the project/activity/initiative. Infrastructural stuff: request made, justification made to community affairs/public relations, public relations gets approval from Trustees, and PR comes back to site and awards contracts and the contractors

If it is a scholarship programme, it is up to my department to collate all the forms, make sure that all supporting documents are in place, collate them and then we do the ranking and everything. And the committee will meet and it is up to my department to do: a presentation on it, the award letters and then a durbar as well for the award winners and their parents.

The communicators of GFGL had important roles in the implementation of CSR initiatives.

4.8 Challenges of communicators in executing CSR goals

The study found out that for both GFGL and NGGL, not all communicators encountered challenges in playing their role to realise the CSR goals of their companies. The challenges
identified however spanned decision-making, communication of identified projects to communities for their buy-in and then implementation of decided CSR initiatives.

4.8.1 Newmont communicators’ challenges

One challenge the NC3 noted was about his role of communicating CSR initiatives undertaken by the company to all stakeholders and how to ethically and effectively involve the media. He said the proliferation of media houses made it difficult to select reliable media houses for communication activities:

It is about media management, due to the proliferation of media houses – which one do you choose to cover your programme and when they come will you give them money for transport or you will rather provide transport to go and pick them and then you give them food? And when you give then just food, will the publication find itself in the stands the next day. If they don’t, does that mean you have to give them the so called ‘soli’ and if you do, are you then influencing them to write your stories? How does that conflict with your ethics policy? It is a bit tricky. That is a grey area we are still working on.

NC1 on the other hand had no challenges at all.

4.8.2 Gold Fields communicators’ challenges

GFC1 noted a challenge which stemmed out of the company’s internal structure. It was about the long processes decided projects needed to go through before implementation which eventually led to the delays and compromised their relationship with communities. He said,

When projects are decided, we have to go through processes to ensure that our policies are adhered to. Occasionally, it will lead to delays but then communities want it and they want it like now. Sometimes we have to explain to them but...

GFC1 pointed out that establishing and maintaining the needed relationships with communities to facilitate their work as communicators could be quite demanding and difficult.

It is a relationship and so you need to build trust over time. So you going to the Chief, sometimes you need to understand that culture, that culture of decision-making to be able to engage with them.
GFC1 pointed identified challenge faced by GFC2 and GFC3 as getting communities’ buy-in for CSR projects originating from the companies – since most of the communities’ members were interested in working in the mine, they usually underrated other projects. He said,

The people who work under me – one of their challenges is that everyone wants to work in the mine and so if you introduce programmes/projects, it is much more difficult to get communities buy-in because it is not a mine job so they are not that interested. So bringing the communities on board is one of their challenges.

According to GFC2, most of the challenges she encountered were linked to the communities’ cooperation on projects originating from the company.

When promoting projects to communities for their buy-in, the usual – some people will accept, others won’t. Other times, it takes a long time to understand something. Sometimes the communities become adamant when some of their requests cannot be met.

GFC3 reinforced the challenge stated by GFC2 and explained that the communities sometimes kicked against projects even after several efforts to make them understand and appreciate the benefits of the project to them.

In getting their buy-in – sometimes it is difficult to persuade people to do what you think is good for them. But in terms of the development, you do not only do what you think is best but what the people also want. Sometimes you have make all the efforts to explain to them how beneficial the project but they have kick against it - which means there is no point in doing something that you know very well that the community will not want. There is always some opposition but we have never had a 100% opposition against a project.

The communicators however capitalized on their healthy relationship with stakeholders in managing those challenges which pertained to the communities.
4.9 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study as they are linked to the research objectives which directed this study. This shows, in essence, that there was a felt need for stakeholder engagement and participation in determination of priorities and execution of projects. The next chapter will discuss the findings, draw conclusions, and offer recommendations for both CSR practice, and further scholarly research.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

Based on the findings presented in the previous chapter, the researcher will interpret and discuss the findings using the two theories underpinning this study and the literature reviewed earlier. The discussions are organized under the research questions the study sought to answer.

5.0.1 RQ1: Involvement of communicator in the decision-making

As revealed by the findings of the study, the involvement of communicators of NGGL and GFGL in the decision-making processes led to the institution of appropriate CSR initiatives for communities. This spanned the identification of appropriate CSR programmes or projects through to implementation.

Grunig and Hunt asserted that social responsibility had become a major reason for an organization to have a public relations function and that public responsibility is a basic tenet of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). They added that if the organization did not need to be responsible to its publics, it also did not need a public relations function; that was to say that the two phenomena were complementary and the communicator could not be isolated from CSR if it had to be successful.

According to the excellence theory, one crucial characteristic of excellent public relations is its involvement in strategic management by being part of the key decision-making of the organisation. In conformity with the excellence study, the communicators of both NGGL and GFGL were found to be strategically positioned within management in a way which enabled them to be part of the decision-making process of their CSR. The literature showed that from the
public relations perspective, there were significant benefits of being involved in the early stages of CSR strategy development as professional communicators would be better able to make recommendations at the outset rather than provide band-aid solutions at a later stage. The findings of the study confirmed the assertion of scholars by revealing the nuances of the decision-making on CSR initiatives and the inputs made by communicators of NGGL and GFGL. Communicators’ knowledge of communities and their expectations came in handy in the process.

The findings also showed that for both NGGL and GFGL, the communities were their primary stakeholders and the main beneficiaries of their CSR. The communicators had a mandate of engaging regularly with communities on varying concerns. According to the literature, CSR presents opportunities for building positive relationships with stakeholders and so delivers target audiences to those managing the corporate image (L’Etang, 2006; Starck and Kruckeberg, 2003). The stakeholder theory emphasized that stakeholder management is a function of public relations or communications. Communicators facilitate the monitoring and interaction between the organisation and all of its stakeholders (Steyn, 1999). Accordingly, the communicators of NGGL and GFGL were instrumental in their companies’ interactions with their respective communities. They played crucial roles in promoting CSR initiatives to communities for their buy-in when the projects originated from the companies.

The strategic direction and support provided by communicators ensured that the CSR initiatives instituted for communities were beneficial to both parties; in that the CSR initiatives met the needs of the communities as well as earned the company reputational capital. The communicators of both companies were seen to be assets for the successful execution of the companies’ CSR goals based on their knowledge of stakeholders and other resourceful expertise.
5.0.2 RQ2: Challenges communicators encounter

The study found out that communicators of both NGGL and GFGL encountered one challenge or the other at their levels of involvement in executing the CSR goals of their respective companies. One major challenge which communicators identified was the overall value companies placed on public relations or communication. Communicators had to justify the importance of the public relations function by their work. This is because public relations practitioners or communicators are easily undervalued in organisations. This largely affirmed Starck and Kruckeberg’s (2003) assertion that communicators would only be used to affect behavioural outcome. Frynas (2005) made a similar assertion that public relations may be used to promote CSR activities developed in response to bad publicity where the company needed to improve its reputation. The assertions by these two scholars reduced the communicator’s importance to only publicity, a challenge which the communicators noted. They therefore had to stretch themselves to earn the confidence of management in order to be involved in strategic decisions. Even though communicators encountered some challenges during community engagements, their knowledge of stakeholders gave them insights on surmounting those challenges.

5.1 Conclusion

The findings revealed the strategic involvement of the communicators of NGGL and GFGL in the institution of appropriate CSR initiatives for communities and how their involvement led to the effective realization of their companies’ CSR goals. The two companies appeared to appreciate the link between CSR and communications just as public relations scholars who have sought to identify the links between the practices of CSR and public relations. Their respective communications departments were structured to enable the two phenomena complement each
other as should be. While the communications department of GFGL was directly in charge of CSR, the communications department of NGGL was structured in the way that it provided the desirable complementary support to the department directly in charge of CSR.

Newmont Ghana Gold Limited and Gold Fields Ghana Limited were able to reap the all-encompassing benefits of their respective CSR goals because communicators were involved from conception to execution.

Three of the five themes of significant management, philanthropic, value-driven, communication, and none identified by Kim and Reber (2008), were applicable to the communicators of NGGL and GFGL. They played the advocacy role for communities to management and also provided advisory counsel to management on CSR initiatives (significant management theme). Communicators seemed to have embraced CSR as a core value of the organization (value-driven theme) – they confirmed communicating, largely externally, the companies CSR activities (communication theme).

Divergent to the research findings of Benn et al (2010) that many leaders still see public relations professionals only as a source of positive publicity, this study found out from the perspective of the communicators that their leaders valued their involvement and contribution to CSR beyond publicity. Under no circumstances were the communicators of NGGL and GFGL used just for publicity since they were involved in the CSR process from start to finish.

5.2 Limitations of study

A major limitation to the study was the scope – two mining companies were studied to find out the role of the communicator in corporate social responsibility. The findings are therefore not representative of the communicator’s role in corporate social responsibility across other sectors.
Learning that CSR was not a core function of communications in one of the companies’ studied, the researcher was interested in soliciting the views of the agencies and or departments which were directly responsible for driving the company’s CSR goals. This was to enable the researcher compare their responses with the responses of the communicators to enrich the data and also ensure the accuracy of facts. This was however not achievable due to time and resource constraints.

5.3 Recommendations and further directions

Considering that the involvement of communicators in the CSR chain ensured the effectiveness of CSR in Newmont and Gold Fields, other companies and sectors should involve their communicators in the execution of their CSR goals to ensure maximum success.

As part of the general findings of the study, persons recruited into one of the companies’ public relations department did not necessarily have professional training in communication. Their unfamiliarity with the communication function decelerated their progress in some ways since they had to rely on their home-grown interpersonal skills to execute their tasks. It is therefore recommended that individuals placed in public relations departments should have some professional training to enhance their delivery.

Further studies should look at the communicator’s role in CSR across different sectors to ascertain the different perspectives of communicators across those sectors and their role in CSR.

Other studies should also focus on how the contribution of the communicator is valued and its complementary bearing on the communicator’s efforts in the CSR chain.
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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide for communicators of NGGL and GFGL.

Stage 1 – Conceptualisation of CSR

1. How does your company define CSR/ What does CSR mean to your company?
2. What are the goals of your CSR initiatives? What drives those goals - what do you hope to achieve with those initiatives?
3. To what extent is CSR important to your organisation?
4. Who are the main beneficiaries of your CSR initiatives?

Stage 2 – Decision making or determination of initiatives

5. In your company, how are decisions on CSR initiatives taken? Are you involved? How are you involved? Why are you involved? Briefly explain your involvement?
6. Who determines the suitability of CSR initiatives for beneficiaries? What is your role here?
7. Are the communities involved – How are they involved?
8. Does the type of communication practiced in your company determine the level of involvement of the communicator? Please explain.
9. How does the structure of your communications department in your company influence your involvement in the decision-making process?

10. Does the position of the communicator determine the level of involvement?
11. Is your role different from the heads of the two subsidiaries of your company? How are your roles alike or different? Please shed light on it
11b. Is your role different from the director in the head office of your company? How are your roles alike or different? Please shed light on it

12. What challenges do you encounter as a communicator in the decision-making process?

Stage 3 – Engagements with communities for their buy-in

13. How does your company get communities buy-in for CSR initiatives before their implementation?
14. What role do you play in getting communities to buy-into CSR initiatives?
15. How do you promote and communicate with communities in this process – What channels do you use to communicate to them? Can you briefly explain the communication process?
16. Kindly share some experiences or examples
17. What challenges do you encounter in the communication for buy-in process?

Stage 4 – Implementation of determined initiatives

18. What is the process for implementing CSR initiatives in your organisation?
19. What specific roles do you play in the implementation process?
20. Which other departments are involved in the process? What do they do?
21. Upon the completion of CSR interventions, who is responsible for communicating them to beneficiaries and or other stakeholders? Briefly explain
22. What challenges do you encounter in the implementation process?

Other enquiries

23. Do you think your contribution to CSR in your company is valued – In what ways is it valued? What should be done to enhance your contribution to the execution of CSR?